



## **It's Our Turn To Save You by 2Dglasses**

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**Summary:** Eleven collapses to the floor of Starcourt Mall. There is chaos. And now it's their turn to save her. \*Through the eyes of the kids as they deal with what happens to El and continues after Hopper and Joyce arrive\* Takes place at the beginning of The Battle of Starcourt.

## **It's Our Turn To Save You**

"Didn't you hear our code red?"

"Yeah, but I couldn't understand half of what you were saying."

"Goddamn low battery."

"How many times do I have to tell you with the low battery?"

"Well, everything worked out, didn't it Steve?"

"Worked out? We almost died."

"Yeah, but we didn't, did we?"

"It was pretty damn close."

"Okay, Russians? As in, they're working for the Russian government?"

"What is it that you're not comprehending? Am I not speaking English? We have a full-blown Red Dawn situation here."

"So this has nothing to do with the gate?"

"It has everything to do with the gate."

Having everybody back in the same place was a definite relief after the hell they had all been through, but it also meant that they were all playing catch up. So much information was being exchanged that nobody had noticed the telekinetic girl's presence slip away until she collapsed with a loud thud to the floor a few feet away.

"El! El!"

Mike and Dustin led the charge over to the fallen girl and turned her onto her back.

"What's wrong with her?"

Erica had only heard about Eleven from Dustin a few hours previously and she seemed like a comic book hero in the ten-year

old's eyes.

"What's wrong? What's wrong?"

Mike asked frantically as El winced in pain, blood dripping from her nose and with tears in her eyes.

"My leg. My leg."

Her voice was weak and it was now that Mike noticed how pale she was, which only accentuated the dark circles under her eyes.

"Her leg. Okay."

Jonathan confirmed and set to work pulling up El's trouser leg before removing the blood soaked bandages. Nancy helped and revealed a horrifying sight.

The wound looked alive. Darkened and swelling. Dustin immediately brought his hand up to his mouth and Mike froze. Suddenly, the wound began to move and Eleven yelped in pain. He immediately moved back up to her face and grabbed her shoulders.

"El! El!"

She writhed against his touch, the pain becoming so intense and wailed through gritted teeth.

"El! El, are you okay?"

Dustin glanced up at Max who was at a complete loss of what to do.

"El! El!"

She screamed. The agony in her voice tore through the mall and shook everyone to their core. Will could only watch his best friend become more frantic as he held the girl he loved because it was the only thing he could do. Mike felt her hand reach for his and he looked back down at the wound which now looked angry somehow.

"What is that?"

Erica moved closer to El's leg to get a better look.

"There's something in there."

"No!"

El wailed as she tightened her grip on Mike's hand.

"Jesus Christ."

Was all Dustin could say as he felt his stomach turn.

Suddenly, Jonathan began to stand up.

"Keep her talking. Keep her awake, okay!"

He took off sprinting towards the other end of the food court.

Mike could see Eleven starting to fade so he gently shook her shoulder.

"Hey, hey, hey. Stay awake. Stay awake. Let's get her on this side, on this side."

Dustin and Steve helped to shift El so that she was lying back into Mike and Dustin's laps. She yelped as Nancy carefully took the distressed girl's good leg and moved it away from her wounded one.

"You know, it's not actually that bad."

Robin spoke up now trying to help in any way she could, seeing how dire the situation seemed.

"There was a... the goalie on my soccer team, Beth Wildfire, this other girl slid into her leg and, like, the bone came right out of her knee- six inches or something, it was insane."

"Robin."

Steve interrupted.

"Yeah?"

"You're not helping."

"I'm sorry."

Just as El seemed like she was going to pass out, Jonathan returned.

"Okay. All right, El?"

She looked up at him through blurred vision, panting through laboured breaths.

"This is gonna hurt like hell, okay?"

"Okay."

Her sobbing voice was heartbreaking. She knew full well how much more additional pain she was about to go through and she was trying her best to be brave. She was, after all, just a kid.

"You need to stay real still."

Jonathan instructed as he put on some plastic gloves.

"Here, you're gonna want to bite down on this, okay?"

The older teen handed Mike a wooden spoon.

"Jesus Christ."

Dustin commented in dread as Mike placed the spoon gently between El's teeth. He took her shoulder again and held on tight.

"Holy shit. Holy shit."

Jonathan looked up at the group one more time, completely overwhelmed at what he was about to do and caught Nancy's equally scared face before placing the knife against the wound.

"Do it."

Mike said.

"Okay."

He placed pressure against the girl's skin and instantly the sound was sickening. Slicing through the darkened skin caused blood to immediately leak out and Dustin felt the grip in his hand tighten like a vice. Eleven's screams caused the party's hearts to shatter.

Erica just watched in shock as Nancy brought her hand up to her face as if to shield herself from what she was seeing. Even Jonathan was having a hard time watching what he was doing himself. He dropped the knife and prepared himself.

Without a moments more hesitation he stuck his fingers into the freshly cut wound, immediately feeling the warmth from the inside of Eleven's leg. It was absolutely excruciating and the girl could only writhe and scream as she felt him feel around for the entity inside of her.

Mike and Dustin stared in shock as Will cried at the sight of Eleven fighting against the pain. However, seeing just how much El was twisting and pulling away it seemed to be becoming cruel.

"Jonathan!"

Nancy protested.

"Stop talking!"

He replied, trying once more to feel for what was inside her leg.

"Goddamn it!"

"No! Stop it!"

Mike looked down to see El spit out the spoon and try to shift forward.

"Stop! Stop!"

Nancy pushed against Jonathan's shoulder and he sat back, completely spent.

"I can do it."

El reassured them weakly.

"I can do it."

Mike helped El sit up. He hated to see the girl he loved in so much pain, and he hadn't even fully processed what she was experiencing, but that thing still was still inside her and they needed it out. Max glanced over at Lucas who was staring intently, waiting for what was about to come.

El reached her hand down over the wound and focused all of her power on pulling that thing out. It was agony and it was doing everything to fight against her pull.

Robin could only watch this poor girl, who she didn't really understand, scream her lungs out.

Eleven's voice erupted into an exhausted and frustrated wail and everyone around her could feel a shift in pressure right before the glass behind them shattered. When they looked back around they saw the rogue claw that had latched itself onto El's leg levitating in mid air before, with one last effort, being flung as far as the girl could manage.

Mike saw El's shoulders dip forward and his hand on her back felt the breath leaving her lungs. Everybody watched as the claw-like piece of the Mind Flayer was crushed in its' escape by none other than Hopper. Next to him was Joyce.

And the relief the kids felt at that moment it was immense. The adults, on the other hand, had no idea what was going on. But nobody had a chance to even begin to ask before Eleven finally couldn't hold herself up any longer and fell backwards into Mike's arms, unconscious.

"El!"

Mike shook her shoulders, only now really feeling how damp her shirt was. He reached up with his free hand and felt her shining forehead.

"She's burning up."



Without another word Hopper and Joyce ran over to the group.

"What the hell is going on here?"

The Chief asked as he knelt down beside his daughter and took in the sight of her.

"What was that thing?"

Joyce asked.

"She was bitten. The Mind Flayer, it got her."

Will explained to his mother without taking his eyes from the injured girl.

"What? How did- Is she-"

Hopper began to get worried as he took El by the shoulders and examined her for any sign of an injury until he spotted the wound.

"Jonathan tried to cut it out of her..."

Lucas began, causing Jim to glance down at the blood pooled around the kitchen knife. He felt a lump form in his throat as he moved his eyes back up. He stopped when he saw the wooden spoon resting beside her hip. He reached down and picked it up to see the teeth marks imprinted on the handle. His heart sank and Mike exchanged a sad glance with Max at the Chief's expression. Joyce reached down and rested her hand on Jim's shoulder.

"She got it out herself."

Jonathan informed them before Nancy took his hand and squeezed it reassuringly. Hopper looked up and nodded at the older Byers boy.

"That was real fast thinkin', kid."

Jonathan smiled tightly and nodded back.

Hopper looked back down at El and felt his mind racing.

"Alright, so that thing that I stomped on. That was it? I mean, there's

nothing else inside of her, right?"

He didn't address anyone in particular, but Mike was the one to answer.

"It was moving around before. Underneath her skin. I think she got all of it."

Hopper leaned down to confirm that there was no more movement around the wound, but he also saw how nasty it looked.

"Alright."

He reached down and Mike and Dustin helped him take El into to his arms. He stood up and turned to Joyce.

"I'll need your help."

"Of course. Yeah."

The kids all stood up.

"Where are you going?"

Mike asked as if they were going to take her away. Hopper glanced at him for a moment before turning and walking towards the food court.

"Sit tight, kid."

Joyce could see how worried Mike was. How worried they all were.

"We're just going to take care of her. Don't worry, sweetie."

She took in everybody's exhausted and scared faces.

"Why don't you guys go find some snacks and take a break, huh? We're just making sure she's okay. We'll be right over there."

Nancy took this opportunity to take her brother gently by the arm.

"Mike, come on. She'll be fine. Let's find something sweet for her for when she wakes up. Okay?"

His sister's suggestion was enough for him to reluctantly step back and turn to her. Nancy exchanged a knowing look before the woman set off to follow Hopper. But she felt a tug on her shirt.

"Mom."

Joyce turned to see Will.

"Let me help. Please."

The way he spoke told Joyce that her son needed to go with her. She took his delicate hand and nodded through a smile.

"Come on."

They jogged after Hopper who had Eleven lying on the counter of one of the restaurants. He was searching through the shelves until he managed to find the first aid kit. He set it down and grabbed all the bandages that there were. He glanced back down at the wound and shook his head.

"We're gonna need a lot more than this."

"I'll check next door."

Joyce said before running to find more supplies. Hopper leaned down against the counter and ran his hand through his hair, letting out a tired sigh. He looked up to see Will on the other side of the counter. He was staring down at El through glassy eyes.

"How're you holdin' up, kid?"

He could still remember clear as day everything that the Byers boy had been through over the last two years. How the monster had taken hold of him so strongly and refused to let go. He remembered how he screamed in that hospital bed and how intense he felt the need to get that thing out of him.

But he didn't answer the Chief's question. He just continued to stare down at Eleven.

"He came for her."

His voice was small and hushed.

"Who did?"

"The Mind Flayer. He wants her."

Hopper looked down at El.

"He came to the cabin, where we were. She... she was protecting us. Fighting him off..."

Jim could see in the boy's eyes that he was reliving what happened to bring them to this point. Joyce returned with some bandages and disinfectant. She caught a glimpse of Hopper's face and followed his gaze over to Will who seemed to be in a trance.

"He grabbed her. He had her... He could have..."

Joyce saw how upset her son was becoming.

'Some stupid girl.' She was so much more than 'some stupid girl' and he regretted ever saying that.

"She saved us. Again and again, she saved us... And... seeing her on the ground with that thing inside of her..."

A tear fell down Will's cheek and he blinked, finally breaking his gaze from Eleven. Hopper looked down at his daughter and at how exhausted she looked. The dark circles under her eyes were so prominent and the blood that was now dried under both of her nostrils was never a good sign. It reminded him of when she had closed the gate.

"Honey, she's safe. We have to help her now, okay?"

Joyce set to work at opening the bandages and Will ran a cloth under the sink behind the counter and began to gently wipe away the blood around the wound. There didn't seem to be any additional bleeding so Hopper uncapped the bottle of disinfectant and tipped it over the angry looking cut.

The girl made a small noise and shifted slightly, causing Will to run

around and grab her hand.

"Eleven. Hey, its okay."

The girl's eyes slowly opened and she immediately furrowed her brows. Once she was able to focus she blinked up at the boy.

"W-Will?"

He smiled down at her.

"Yeah, it's me. You're okay."

She let out a tired sigh, completely exhausted from the feeling of pain. She was no stranger to pain. Her tolerance was high, but she had felt so much lately that she was almost becoming numb to it. Her eyes felt heavy, but she fought against the enticing pull of unconsciousness.

"What is... Where..."

She couldn't even figure out what she wanted to ask, but she was aware of some movement around her legs and she tightened her grip in Will's hand before lifting her head slightly to look down at the stinging sensation.

"Sweetie, hey."

She was greeted by the loving face of Joyce. The woman moved up to her other side and took her free hand, placing a warm hand on her shoulder as Hopper continued to treat the burning wound.

"You're doing so good, honey."

A tear automatically fell down the girl's face as she felt her leg being lifted which caused an intense wave of pain. She felt heat rush through her and she shut her eyes tight, letting out a small whine. Her grip tightened in both of their hands.

"Shh, shh. It's almost over, El."

Will reassured the girl by rubbing his thumb over the girl's knuckles.

Joyce smiled over at her son, proud of him for doing his best to be there for this girl. She remembered everything that Eleven had done for Will. She remembered holding her crying, scared and saturated form in the pool back at the school when she had communicated with Will the first time. She remembered El sitting beside her unconscious son when he was still possessed by The Mind Flayer.

"Okay, that should do it."

Jim finished bandaging his daughter's leg and joined Joyce's side to look down at El who seemed to be semi-conscious.

"She's out of it, Hop."

The Chief nodded.

"Okay, we need to get something into her. Come on."

Will and Joyce pulled Eleven up so that Hopper could easily take her into his arms. As they made their way back to the other side of the mall, Jim felt the weight against his chest shift and he looked down to see El blinking up at him through heavy and dark eyes.

"D-Dad?"

Hopper smiled down at the girl and tightened his hold of her.

"I got ya, kid."

They made their way back to others and Hopper sat down on a bench, resting El down beside him. Joyce gave the girl's shoulder a gentle squeeze and Hopper a smile before going over to check on Jonathan.

Jim gently pulled his daughter back so that she was lying against him. When he was happy that she was in a comfortable position he looked up only to be met with Mike Wheeler.

"How is she?"

The boy immediately asked. Hopper saw that he was holding a big drink in his hand. He reached out his hand.

"It's for El."

"Gimme the damn drink."

Mike reluctantly handed it over and Hopper took a big sip before leaning down to get a look at El. Without a word, Mike knelt down and took her hand. She was still drifting in and out of consciousness and Jim saw the concern etched in the boy's face.

"You okay?"

Mike glanced up at the Chief briefly before quickly nodding, more focused on El.

"I'm fine."

He clearly wasn't.

"Mike."

Jim's tone was stern and he didn't look away from the kid until he caved. Mike let out a small sigh and sat back on his heels.

"I-It was scary. Seeing her like that. In so much pain."

When it was happening, it had reminded Mike of what had happened to Will the previous year. Having to sit and watch someone you care about in pain and not being able to do anything to help.

"I'll bet it was, kid."

Hopper felt the ball of heat resting against him shift a little.

"It's just... these past few days, a lot of intense shit went down."

Jim didn't care that the boy had cursed in front of him. He wanted to hear what he had to say. He needed to and he knew that Mike needed him to.

"And El, she was there to save us every time. Even when she almost died... she still, she still fought for us."

The boy tightened his grip on Eleven's smaller hand as he felt the

tears well up.

"I've been kind of a jerk to her lately."

Mike admitted, not able to look up at the Chief. Hopper felt a drop inside his chest at the sadness in the boy's voice.

"No, kid. This isn't on you."

Mike looked up at Jim quizzically.

"What?"

"Look, everything I said, before, in the car. I meant it, but..."

He let out a sigh.

"I should have went about it differently."

Hopper looked down at the intertwined hands in front of him.

"You've been through a lot together and I'm sorry, kid."

Mike was stunned into silence, but before he could react, the small body in Hopper's embrace began to shift. Jim saw that El was coming around so he held out the drink to Mike. The boy moved closer and took it from the Chief before leaning in towards the girl.

"El? Hey, it's Mike. Can you hear me?"

After a moment, her knotted brows softened and her tired eyes slowly opened. It was hard to see where those dark orbs were focused, but he got his answer when her shaky lips parted.

"Mike?"

He smiled and glanced up at Hopper reassuringly before lifting up the drink so that the straw was near her mouth.

"Yeah, it's me, El. It's Mike. I brought you a drink. It's strawberry. Your favourite."

Hopper felt his heart warm up as he was reminded of Alexei.



Eleven leaned her head down and took the straw into her mouth. She closed her eyes and Hopper felt her sigh into the sweet taste of the cool liquid. It felt so nice against her raw throat that had been shredded from how much she was forced to scream lately. Mike held up the cup so that she could take it into her own hands. He smiled at how big the cardboard was in her small and delicate hands.

"Oh, I brought this."

The boy held up a damp cloth he had been holding.

"For her temperature."

Jim let out a quiet chuckle and took the cloth before holding it up to the girl's burning head.

"Thanks, kid."

Mike nodded and stood up to be met by Joyce who had returned.

"Hey, honey. Nancy has some nachos from the theatre. Everyone's eating."

He had to admit he was starving and he saw that Joyce had brought some for El, so he nodded and glanced back down at Eleven who was looking up at him with the straw still in her mouth. She looked adorable and simply smiled up at him. He took this as a confirmation that she was okay and he gave one last look to Hopper before turning to Joyce. She put a hand on his arm and smiled at him. He then made his way over to the others.

Joyce let out a little laugh and reached down to lift El's leg so that the wounded one rested on her lap.

"Hey, sweetie. How are you feeling?"

El removed the drink from her mouth and gave the woman a sweet smile. She returned the sentiment and glanced up at Jim.

"These kids, huh?"

Hopper began as he watched the group sitting around a nearby table.

You'd be none the wiser that they had been through a lifetime of trauma already.

"Sometimes you forget that they are... just kids."

Joyce replied and looked at the cute form of Eleven smothered in Hopper's embrace. Jim reached down and took her hand in his own, wrapping his daughter's blue tie that was around her wrist around his thumb also so that they were entwined together.

"They really are somethin' else."